

Expectations and reality in the cover of the archive and documentation necessities in the MAM of television

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*If we were wise
these mutual emotions we would use.
Thus it would be destroyed,
treating in good faith,
the great blindness where each one
it is by itself.
(Molière)*

Abstract: The existing differences between the expectations created by the technical possibilities of the digitalization in television, and the development of new functionalities offered by MAM (Media Asset Management) in the scope of the work flows of the archives and documentation departments are exposed. Also a proposal is made of corporative work in FIAT (International Federation of Television Archives) to elaborate a guide of functionalities who can be of utility to the people in charge of archives, areas of engineering and suppliers of MAM in the evaluation, selection and implementation of solutions of this type in television.

Keywords: digitalization; television; archives; documentation departments; work-flows; work groups; MAM; Media Asset Management; FIAT; International Federation of Archives of Television;

Scheme:

1. *Introduction*
2. *Reasons for the expectations of functionality of the new MAM on documentary processes and of file.*
3. *Expectations of functionality: examples*
4. *Reasons for the detected absences of functionality in the MAM*
5. *Proposal of work to FIAT*

1. Introduction.

Considered of general form, the advantages that it provides the digital technology for the management of the images and the archives of television are very significant in many aspects. This is, evidently, as obvious that today nobody discusses. Nevertheless the euphoria of the digitalization would not have to make forget the difficulties that represent their application in an organization with the flows and processes of

established and consolidated works of audio-visual production in a mainly analogical context.

Substantial part of these difficulties is in the gap between the exposition of necessities that are generated in the different departments before the potential possibilities from the new systems of automatization, and the real cover that provide existing products in the market and the reach the projects developed for their implantation.

The departments of documentation and archive of the companies of television in digitalization process do not escape to this contradiction. Rather on the contrary, he is not risky to admit that the degree of frustration between expectation and reality is more accusing in this area of the activity of the television that in others. We based this affirmation on two fundamental reasons:

1) The basic functionalities of the systems of automatization or MAM (Media Asset Management) of the market usually fit with the main operations of the audio-visual production: ingesting, non linear edition, writing tools, and play out. It is certain that not necessarily a same product covers all the functions, or they excessively do it of simplified form, but in such case the absences are resolved with the supply of external modules whose technical integration a priori is guaranteed. In the case of the documentary tools, it is more frequent than the initial product does not include them, and less frequent the commercial alternative of integration with external products.

2) The processes associated to the management of images that exceed the basic functionality represent a level of sophistication rarely contemplated by the suppliers. In fact they are functionalities that correspond more to the development of processes, but that evidently require of technical operations that need to be between the possibilities of the MAM. The reason is in that the archive materials have a permanence in the time, and therefore in the system, much greater than the one of the rest of materials implied in the production process. In fact in a high proportion they are materials of definitive archive, that will remain in the system and will be reused much later of the moment in which they were generated. Thus, this greater permanence corresponds with its potential reusability in the time like material for new productions, and therefore it has associate exclusive functionalities related to the conservation, search and distribution that other materials with smaller service life do not share.

A similar dynamics, that is to say, a feeling of frustration because of the contradiction between expectation and reality, can also occur when the product is developed internally instead of being acquired key in hand. In this case the frustration of the expectations grows proportionally whichever minor is the departmental incidence of the archive in the processes of definition and decision making of the engineering areas and systems, normally responsible for the digitalization projects. Always considering that any system, commercial or no, needs a process implantation in which a greater implication of the different affected areas always results in the success of the project.

This work, presented/displayed in a workshop on implantation of MAM in the professional context of the international conference of FIAT in Madrid in October of 2006, aims for three objectives:

1. To identify the reasons for the existence of expectations on the functionalities of the MAM applicable to the processes of work in the management of audio-visual archives.
2. To identify the reasons for which a gap between possible and real functionalities in the digitalization projects takes place.
3. To raise a work proposal to elaborate a tool that helps to the people in charge of archives and documentation departments to its positioning in the taking of decisions in a future processes of digitalisation, or actual projects in process.

2. Reasons for the expectations of functionality of the new MAM on archive processes.

We showed next some of the generic advantages amply known that present the digitalization of the processes of production from the substitution of the hardware or video tapes by the files of images.

In these new possibilities it is in which the identification of potential improvements of the work processes leans which we will see more ahead, which are not guaranteed by the mere fact that the technical possibilities exist. This is the base of the main idea of this work, and allows to understand the difference between expectations and reality to which it is alluded to above. The list is not exhaustive.

The possibilities to which we talked about are the following ones:

- Movement of images between different devices, with speeds of transference several times superior to the duration of the material transferred in real time.
- Simultaneous use by two or most users of a same resident material in some of the devices of the system, and specially in the devices of archive.
- Automatism of functions according to the programming of certain conditions based on results of manual operations or also automated.
- Online storage of high volumes of information with direct access from the workstations, solving the traditional problem of the lack of space in the archives.
- Automatic Generation of different qualities from the material managed according to the use destiny.
- Facilities for the selection, edition and compilation of images.
- Administration of individual document or *asset* related to each other in the data bases from the logical identification of two or more documentary units within a same file.
- Possibilities of sharing information coming from different areas of the circuit of production and play out.
- Access to the visualization of the complete document in comparison with the merely referential option of the systems of previous data bases.
- Tracking possibilities of the operations and the movements of files.

3. Expectations of functionality: examples

Considering the technical possibilities of the previous list, it is possible to easily identify possible improvements in the analogical flows of images and data of the

material of archive in his transition to the digital surroundings. Although this operation is in favour partially conditional of the own characteristics of production of each company in individual. However, it can be arrived at a basic consensus of necessities from which its practical application will vary in each circumstance according to its own conditioners.

It is not the object of this work to show a complete list of all the possible options. Rather on the contrary, the idea is to propose a corporative model of work within FIAT to obtain this list, as it is seen in section 5. Next we will show only some examples:

- Automatic incorporation of the rights information introduced in the production shot lists like metadata associated to the archive material.
- Automatic import of the associated metadata to a material of archive in the traditional data base at the moment of the ingestion for retrospective digitalization.
- Maintenance of the relation between the rough material, the clips, and the program in which the clips are included for the play out, avoiding duplications of archive and metadata.
- Link existence between file, shot and *key frame* that allows the administration of common and differentiated metadata for each one of the three units of content.
- Automatic incorporation of *scripts* of agency like optional associated metadata to the clip selected for archive.
- Alert individualized by users of new entrances of materials in the system that cover a certain profile with content defined previously.
- Control of the use of the archive material.
- Neuronal way of presentation of the results of the searches that facilitates the navigation.
- Partial retrieve of the digital library of one or more parts of an archive file.

4. Reasons for the detected absences of functionality in the MAM

Actually many of the MAM systems that are in the market and which are settling in the television companies only partially cover the expectations of the documentation departments and archives. We have classified in three types the reasons for it:

4.1. Deficiencies in products of MAM in the market.

- Products that are in initial or intermediate phases of development, reason why determined modules or functions are not available.
- Partial cover of the main areas or functions of the circuit of production, and therefore necessity of integration with other products of third.
- Options of integration with other systems, devices, hardware or software are not contemplated necessary to include all the phases of the production.
- An excessive simplification of the functions occurs, which actually supposes a resignation to operations already solved in the world tape which they replace.
- They do not reflect the reality of the processes and flows of information and images of a center of television production.

4.2. Deficiencies in the identification of necessities.

- The supplier does not know the operative, flows and systems of work of the archive and documentation departments.
- Coordination between the analysts of processes and the developers in the identification of necessities and its implantation does not exist.
- The equipment of documentation and file does not participate in the decision making in the election and/or definition of the product, and therefore it does not have facilities for the expression of necessities.
- The areas of engineering of the company are not sensible to the necessities of the flows of images related to the documentation department and the archive
- The people in charge of the file do not know the context of the rest of systems of other televisions, reason why they cannot value the appropriateness of his demands in comparison with a real scene.
- The people in charge of the archive do not have a comparative parameter of functionalities of greater to smaller complexity, reason why they are lost in the identification and exigency of necessities according to difficulty levels, and therefore of cost. (Nevertheless it is precise to mention here that not always exists a relation between the apparent complexity of a functionality and the cost of development that represents).

4.3. Deficiencies in the implantation.

- Companies with very closed products of MAM that offer strong resistance to new developments to cover the necessities of individual clients.
- The necessity of fulfillment of budgets harms the worse defined functionalities, that can be relegated to later phases of the development.
- The people in charge of the archive or documentation department are not member of the work groups for the development and implantation of the product.
- The people in charge of the archive do not know the design, the structure and the supply of the MAM, reason why they cannot identify potentials applications for the work of the archive.

5. Proposal of work to FIAT

At sight of the previous difficulties, it could conclude that one of the existing reasons for the gap between expectations and reality in the reflection of the necessities of the file in the implantation of MAM it is the absence of a knowledge sufficiently extended of the functional potentiality of these systems. This causes difficulties for the identification of necessities and the evaluation of the product, and affects the final taking of decisions negatively. The other element to consider is the one of the problems of implantation, partly also due to information deficiencies, and partly caused by a lack of positioning of the documentation departments and archives in the organized multidepartmental equipment for this aim.

The proposal that we gather next could give answer to first of both raised elements of difficulty, and diminish the consequences of the second.

The idea that sets out is the creation of a work group in FIAT with the objective to define and to structure a list of possible functionalities in the scope of documentation

and archive susceptible to be including in a MAM. Functionality would be understood with an ample criterion that included not only the functions in themselves, but its extension to the cover of the main work flows of the images of archive in television.

It would be tried therefore to elaborate a Guideline of documentation departments and archive functionalities in a MAM of television (Guide MAM in Documentation and Archive) with four lines of activity:

- Identification of possible functionalities in the scope of documentation and archive susceptible to be contemplated in a MAM.
- Description and justification of the necessity of the proposed functionalities
- Classification in three levels of complexity, sophistication or difficulties of implementation, to allow the planning of the projects of this type by phases of development and evolution.
- Diffusion between the FIAT members.

The putting in common of accumulated experiences in the evaluation or implantation of tools of this type in different televisions worldwide would guarantee to the project:

- An ample collective vision of the present supply of the market
- An also very ample identification of the necessities from the own experience of each unit of information, documentation and archive
- A prestige and an identity like organization who groups common interests in the matter of archive and can act like referring organizational of international scope for the identification of necessities to cover by a MAM

The objectives of this proposal can be represented in the following points:

- To take advantage in a common objective of the shared knowledge that at the moment it resides dispersed among the different people and organizations integrated in FIAT. This would represent the putting in practice of techniques of management of knowledge and information, that on the other hand it is what our function in the scope of the information units, documentation and archive characterize.
- To provide a tool that clearly identifies the necessities to the managers of archives in digitalization process
- To facilitate a document endorsed by FIAT that can be included with facility in the requirements of development of a MAM, even and preferredly in situations in which the documentalistas do not accede with facility to the meetings, visits, tests, etc. that the process of decision making constitutes
- To allow the areas of engineering of the companies to also identify functionalities that often do not know, with a simple structure by complexity levels that facilitate the planning of the projects by phases and budgetary availability
- To allow the suppliers to identify the real necessities of the market existing and potential to which their products go, being facilitated the development of its products according to a scale of options that in certain way can get to determine excellence levels

In summary, the great objective is to take advantage of the resident knowledge in the organizations and professionals who integrate it for a common objective of practical application.

Conceptually this work would mean for FIAT a reinforcement in its paper of support to the development of the lines of management of the archives associated to the organization, having combined the individual experience and knowledge of each one of the companies associated with the corporative endorsement that represent the abbreviations of FIAT in an international level.